

Capsule Summary

Brownstown Historic District (Montgomery County #18/29)

Route 118, near Germantown

Germantown, Maryland

Public

The Brownstown Historic District was the site of a 19th century community of freed slaves. It was named for an early settler, William Brown, and at one time had its own shcool and church.

The only remnant of the community is the small abandoned frame schoolhouse.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

M:18-29

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Brownstown Historic District

(18/29)

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Darnestown-Germantown Road (Rte. 118)

CITY, TOWN

Germantown

☒ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

8

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Montgomery

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

☒ DISTRICT

☐ BUILDING(S)

☐ STRUCTURE

☐ SITE

☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC

☒ PRIVATE

☐ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS

☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☐ OCCUPIED

☒ UNOCCUPIED

☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

☐ YES: RESTRICTED

☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED

☐ NO

PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE

☐ MUSEUM

☐ COMMERCIAL

☐ PARK

☒ EDUCATIONAL

☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE

☐ ENTERTAINMENT

☐ RELIGIOUS

☐ GOVERNMENT

☐ SCIENTIFIC

☐ INDUSTRIAL

☐ TRANSPORTATION

☐ MILITARY

☒ OTHER: Vacant
(Abandoned)

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

☐ VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Montgomery County Courthouse

Liber #:

Folio #:

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Rockville

STATE

Maryland

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Montgomery County Historic Sites Survey

DATE

1977

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☒ COUNTY ☐ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

M-NCPPC

Needwood Rd.

CITY, TOWN

Rockville, Md.

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

M:18-29

CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT
☐ GOOD
☐ FAIR

☒ DETERIORATED
☐ RUINS
☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☒ UNALTERED
☐ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE
☐ MOVED DATE Late
1880's

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

In the late 19th century there was a small community of blacks living on the Darnestown-Germantown Road (Route 118), not far from Old Germantown. Named Brownstown after one William Brown, who lived in a log cabin in the area, the community had a schoolhouse and a church by 1878. The first church services for members of the community were held in William Brown's cabin, built of logs on ten acres of land which he purchased in 1868.

In the 1970's, the Brownstown Historic District was placed on the Montgomery County Atlas of Historic Sites as a potential historic district, subject to additional research and presentation to the Historic District Commission for review.

In reviewing the proposed district, the Commission found that the area lacked a sufficient concentration of historic resources to warrant designation. The house belonging to William Brown was dismantled and moved to the Lathrop Smith Outdoor Education Center in 1979, for use in a "Pioneer Homestead" program. The building is now the property of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. The Brownstown Schoolhouse, which still stands on Route 118, is abandoned and in poor condition. The building has been evaluated for placement on the Master Plan by the Historic Preservation Commission and rejected. Nearby, on Black Rock Road, is a black church which dates from 1959; but it is on the site which has been used for a church by the black community since the late 1800's.

The Commission voted to delete the Brownstown Historic District from the Atlas at their meeting in October, 1984.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

8 SIGNIFICANCE

M:18-29

PERIOD

PREHISTORIC
_1400-1499
_1500-1599
_1600-1699
_1700-1799
☒ 1800-1899
_1900-

_ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC
_ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC
_AGRICULTURE
_ARCHITECTURE
_ART
_COMMERCE
_COMMUNICATIONS

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

_COMMUNITY PLANNING
_CONSERVATION
_ECONOMICS
_EDUCATION
_ENGINEERING
_EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT
_INDUSTRY
_INVENTION

_LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
_LAW
_LITERATURE
_MILITARY
_MUSIC
_PHILOSOPHY
_POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

_RELIGION
_SCIENCE
_SCULPTURE
_SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
_THEATER
_TRANSPORTATION
_OTHER (SPECIFY)
x Black History

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

M:18-29

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION _____

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Lois Snyderman

February 14, 1985

ORGANIZATION

8804 Spring Valley Rd.

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

(301) 654-6423

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Chevy Chase,

Md.

STATE

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438

To: Montgomery County Historic Preservation Community
From: Lois Snyderman, Research Assistant
Subject: Proposed Historic District, Brownstown (18/29)
Date: October 29, 1984

It is my recommendation that the proposed Brownstone Historic District be deleted from the Atlas of Historic Sites because of insufficient historic resources. The house which belonged to William Brown, for whom the 19th century community which existed in this area (a black community) was named, was moved to the Lathrop Smith Outdoor Education Center in 1979. Located on Muncaster Mill Road, Norbeck, Maryland, it is used for educational purposes as part of the "pioneer Homestead" program. The property is now owned by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission.

The Brownstown School House, which is still standing on Route 118, in very poor condition and abandoned, has already been evaluated for placement on the Montgomery County Master Plan and rejected.

Because of this area's history as a black settlement, some type of historic marker might be considered.

M:18-29

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATIONSee correspondence dated May 9, 1988ACTION TAKEN

APPENDIX A

SITES NOT RECOMMENDED FOR REGULATION UNDER THE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION ORDINANCE CHAPTER 24A OF THE
MONTGOMERY COUNTY CODE

The following sites have been reviewed by the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission and were found not to merit designation on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. If not included in the Master Plan, these resources may be removed from the Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites in Montgomery County. If removed from the Locational Atlas, the site will no longer be governed by the Moratorium on Alteration and Demolition, Section 24A-10 of the County's Historic Preservation Ordinance. The sites will, however, remain on the Maryland Historical Trust's Inventory.

The following sites were found by the Preservation Commission to be too greatly altered from the period of their architectural or historical significance or not to meet Ordinance criteria for designation.

18/29

Brownstown Historic
DistrictBlack Rock Rd. & Rt. 118
Germantown, MD

M: 18-29
Brownstown Survey District
Germantown Road (MD 118)
Germantown Quadrangle

